

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEL AV 04429 01 OF 02 172010Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-07 IO-13 SSM-03 OMB-01 /092 W
-----172023Z 119886 /63

R 171331Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6774
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TEL AVIV 4429

E.O. 11652: GDSS
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, IS
SUBJECT: IMPLICATIONS OF THE DMC/LIKUD NEGOTIATIONS

REF: TEL AVIV 4271

1. THERE ARE SEVERAL IMPLICATIONS WORTH EXAMINING IN THE ABORTIVE NEGOTIATIONS WHICH TOOK PLACE BETWEEN THE DMC AND THE LIKUD TO FORM A GOVERNMENT COALITION. FROM THEM WE CAN GLEAN SOME INDICATIONS OF THE INTERNAL POLICIES THE NEW GOVERNMENT MIGHT FOLLOW AND PROBABLY SOME LESSONS FOR THE U.S. AS WELL.

2. MODERATION? ONE OF THE FIRST CONCLUSIONS WHICH CAN BE DRAWN FROM THE NEGOTIATIONS, AND EVEN MORE FROM THEIR FAILURE, IS THAT BEGIN SHOWED LITTLE OF THE MODERATION OR MAGNANIMITY HE WAS EXPECTED TO DISPLAY ONCE THE WEIGHT OF GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITY BEGAN
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PAGE 02 TEL AV 04429 01 OF 02 172010Z

TO BE FELT. THIS LACK OF MODERATION WAS PARTICULARLY EVIDENT REGARDING THE FUTURE OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES; IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE DMC HAD TO HAVE A COMPROMISE ON THIS SUBJECT MORE THAN ANY OTHER BUT IT FOUND NO GIVE WHATSOEVER. IF BEGIN IS TO MODERATE HIS VIEWS ON TERRITORIAL QUESTIONS, HE IS WAITING TO DO SO IN FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS WITH

OTHER COUNTRIES RATHER THAN IN THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH POTENTIAL COALITION PARTNERS.

3. A TOUGH NEGOTIATOR. A SECOND CONCLUSION IS THAT BEGIN, AS AN INDIVIDUAL, WILL BE A HARD BARGAINER TO FACE ACROSS THE NEGOTIATING TABLE. IN THE DISCUSSIONS WITH THE DMC HE KNEW HE HAD ALL THE HIGH CARDS AND HE PROCEEDED TO PLAY THEM RELENTLESSLY. PARTICIPANTS IN THE DISCUSSIONS HAVE TOLD US THAT THE ATMOSPHERE WAS DISTINCTLY DIFFERENT IN THE FIRST MEETING WHEN BEGIN WAS NOT PRESENT BECAUSE HE WAS STILL IN THE HOSPITAL THAN IN THE SUBSEQUENT SESSIONS. THE TALKS GREW NOTICEABLY MORE DIFFICULT WHEN BEGIN RETURNED TO HEAD THE LIKUD TEAM AND HIS LIEUTENANTS LET HIM DO THE TALKING AND MAKE THE DECISIONS.

4. RESOLUTE LEADERSHIP. GOING ON FROM THE PREVIOUS POINT, IT IS CLEAR IN OTHER RESPECTS THAT BEGIN IS UNCHALLENGED IN HIS LEADERSHIP OF THE LIKUD. WE HAVE IT FROM RELIABLE SOURCES THAT SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE LIBERAL FACTION WERE INCLINED TO BE MORE COMPROMISING TOWARDS THE DMC BUT WERE OVERRULED BY HIM. THEY APPARENTLY NEVER CONTRADICTED HIS VIEWS DURING THE NEGOTIATING SESSIONS. HE CLEARLY HAS THE LIKUD WELL IN HAND AS HE PREPARES TO INSTALL HIS GOVERNMENT. EVEN ASSERTIVE PERSONALITIES LIKE DAYAN AND WEIZMAN ARE BEING EXTRAORDINARILY

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 TEL AV 04429 01 OF 02 172010Z

SENSITIVE TO THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH BEGIN AT THIS POINT TO AVOID CROSSING HIM. OUR ASSUMPTION IS THAT HE WILL EXERT NEARLY THE SAME DEGREE OF UNQUESTIONED LEADERSHIP OVER MINISTERS FROM THE OTHER PARTIES WHO WILL PARTICIPATE IN THE COALITION. EVERYONE WILL KNOW WHO IS BOSS, IN SOME CONTRAST TO THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT.

5. NO CONSULTATIONS. ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF BEGIN'S DOMINANCE IS THE INCLINATION HE HAS SHOWN TO MAKE DECISIONS REGARDING MINISTERIAL APPOINTMENTS WITHOUT HAVING CONSULTED HIS COLLEAGUES. FIRST AND FOREMOST, THERE WAS THE APPOINTMENT OF DAYAN AS FOREIGN MINISTER, ABOUT WHICH BEGIN CONSULTED NEITHER THE LIBERALS OF HIS OWN FACTION NOR THE DMC WITH WHOM HE WAS STILL NEGOTIATING AT THAT TIME. A SECOND EXAMPLE WAS HIS ANNOUNCEMENT THAT LIKUD

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PAGE 01 TEL AV 04429 02 OF 02 171832Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TEL AVIV 4429

FIREBRAND
GEULA COHEN WOULD BE DEPUTY MINISTER
OF EDUCATION; ZEVULUN HAMMER, THE MINISTER-DESIGNATE
FOR EDUCATION, RESPONDED PUBLICLY AND
INDIGNANTLY THAT BEGIN HAD MENTIONED COHEN'S NAME
ONLY IN PASSING BUT THAT HE (HAMMER) HAD NOT
APPROVED HER APPOINTMENT. (COHEN'S NOMINATION
APPEARS TO BE WITHDRAWN IN THE WAKE OF
HAMMER'S OBJECTIONS)

6. DMC NAIVETE? THE NEGOTIATIONS ALSO ILLUSTRATE
THE LACK OF IN-DEPTH POLITICAL EXPERIENCE ON THE
PART OF THE DMC. ALTHOUGH SOME OF ITS TOP LEADER-
SHIP HAVE HAD POLITICAL AND MANAGERIAL EXPERIENCE,
THEY CLEARLY WERE UNABLE TO STAND UP TO BEGIN IN
THE TOUGH NEGOTIATIONS, PRIMARILY BECAUSE THEY
DIDN'T HAVE THE CARDS TO PLAY. NRP CHAIRMAN YOSEF
BURG APTLY CHARACTERIZED THEIR SITUATION BY SAYING
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PAGE 02 TEL AV 04429 02 OF 02 171832Z

THAT THE DMC HAD HOPED TO EMERGE AS THE BALANCE

BETWEEN LABOR AND LIKUD; WHEN THE MAY 17 ELECTION RESULTS CAST THEM IN A DIFFERENT ROLE THEY STILL TRIED TO NEGOTIATE AS THOUGH THEY HELD THE BALANCE. WHILE THE DMC PROBABLY HAD NO ALTERNATIVE TO ATTEMPTING TO NEGOTIATE WITH BEGIN, THE GOALS IT SET FOR ITSELF IN THOSE NEGOTIATIONS WERE UNREALISTICALLY HIGH--THEY ATTEMPTED TO ATTAIN A KEY ROLE IN THE CABINET, WHEN THEIR PARTICIPATION WAS NOT INDISPENSABLE. UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES THEY PROBABLY DID AS WELL AS COULD BE EXPECTED. WE ARE TOLD THAT SOME OF THE DMC NEGOTIATORS, PARTICULARLY TAMIR AND RUBENSTEIN, SHOWED A REMARKABLE LACK OF TACT IN THE WAY THEY ARTICULATED THEIR DEMANDS IN THE NEGOTIATING SESSIONS, SPEAKING TO BEGIN AS IF ONLY THEY WERE MOTIVATED BY HIGH PRINCIPLE. AND YADIN, THE POLULAR ARCHAEOLOGIST, PROVED NO MATCH IN THE POLITICAL ARENA FOR THE TOUGH AND WILY BEGIN, WHO HARDLY BUDGED FROM HIS ADAMANT POSITION --BUT WAS SWEET REASONABLENESS BEFORE THE CAMERAS.

7. IN SUM, WE SEE BEGIN AS HAVING MOVED DECISIVELY AND ALMOST RUTHLESSLY IN THE MONTH SINCE THE ELECTION TO FORM THE GOVERNMENT ON HIS OWN TERMS. HE HAS ESSENTIALLY SAID TO PROSPECTIVE COALITION PARTNERS THAT HE WOULD BE PLEASED TO HAVE THEM IN HIS GOVERNMENT ON HIS TERMS, BUT HE HAS BEEN UNWILLING TO SEEK TO BROADEN HIS MAJORITY IN THE KNESSET BY DILUTING WHAT HE CONSIDERS TO BE THE ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLES UNDER WHICH HE WILL GOVERN. IF HE CONDUCTS HIS DISCUSSIONS AND NEGOTIATIONS WITH EXTERNAL INTERLOCUTORS AS HE HAS WITH POTENTIAL INTERNAL PARTNERS (AND WE SEE NO REASON TO EXPECT OTHERWISE), HE WILL BE A TOUGH NEGOTIATOR. NOT UNREASONING
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PAGE 03 TEL AV 04429 02 OF 02 171832Z

OR INSENSITIVE, BUT TOUGH AND UNYIELDING ON MATTERS WHICH HE REGARDS AS VITAL.
LEWIS

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